Brain break cards: Thinking and puzzles

Cut along the dashed lines. Page 1 of 2. Laminate them, or keep them on a ring.

THINKING AND PUZZLES — 2 min

Alphabet Chain

At your desk · Some talk · Chair OK

Pick a topic such as animals, food or places. Go round the room: each person names one that starts with the next letter, A to Z. The class can help anyone who is stuck, and Q, X and Z may be skipped.

Adapt: Students can point to a picture or write on a whiteboard instead of speaking.

THINKING AND PUZZLES — 2 min

Odd One Out

At your desk · Some talk · Chair OK

Say or show four things, such as cat, dog, carrot, cow. Partners decide which one does not belong and why. Any good reason counts, and there is often more than one answer.

Adapt: Show the four things as pictures as well as words for early readers and students learning English.

THINKING AND PUZZLES — 3 min

Guess My Thing

At your desk · Some talk · Chair OK

One person secretly picks an object in the room. The class asks yes or no questions to find it, with 15 questions in total. Whoever guesses picks the next object.

Adapt: Answer with thumbs up or thumbs down so students who do not speak aloud can lead.

THINKING AND PUZZLES — 2 min

Finish the Pattern

At your desk · Quiet · Chair OK

Clap, tap or draw a pattern: clap, clap, tap; or circle, square, square. The class continues it, then works out what comes tenth. A student makes the next pattern.

Adapt: Draw the pattern on the board as well as clapping it.

THINKING AND PUZZLES — 3 min

Word Ladder

At your desk · Quiet · Chair OK

Write a short word on the board, such as cat. Change one letter at a time to make a new word at each step: cat, hat, hot, dot. How long a ladder can the class build in 3 minutes?

Adapt: Younger classes change only the first letter; older classes use four-letter words.

THINKING AND PUZZLES — 2 min

Quick Draw

At your desk · Quiet · Chair OK

Call out an object. Everyone has 20 seconds to draw it on scrap paper or a whiteboard, then holds it up. Five rounds, and the funnier the drawings, the better.

Adapt: Allow a shape, a label or a mime for anyone who does not want to draw.

Brain break cards: Thinking and puzzles

Cut along the dashed lines. Page 2 of 2. Laminate them, or keep them on a ring.

THINKING AND PUZZLES 2 min

Would You Rather

Beside desks | Some talk | Chair OK

Read a would you rather question. Children move to one side of the room for each choice, or hold up 1 or 2 fingers. One person from each side says why.

Adapt: Holding up fingers works for everyone and keeps the room quiet.

THINKING AND PUZZLES 2 min

Higher or Lower

At your desk | Some talk | Chair OK

Think of a number from 1 to 100. The class guesses, and you answer only "higher" or "lower". Count the guesses and try to beat the class record next time.

Adapt: Show higher and lower with a thumb up or down as well as saying it.

THINKING AND PUZZLES 3 min

Story Chain

At your desk | Some talk | Chair OK

Start a story with one sentence. Each person in turn adds one sentence. The last person has to finish the story in exactly five words.

Adapt: Anyone may pass, or add a sound effect instead of a sentence.

THINKING AND PUZZLES 2 min

Think Fast

At your desk | Some talk | Chair OK

Name a category, such as things that are round. In pairs, list as many as you can in one minute. Compare lists: score a point for each item no other pair has.

Adapt: Pairs can draw items instead of writing them.